WE CLAIM:

1. A method of playing a Keno-type game, comprising the steps of:

providing a game display having a plurality of game element locations;

selecting game element locations in a number fewer than said plurality;

providing a set of game elements with differing indicia;

after selecting said game element locations, then randomly assigning a game element to at least each said selected game element location for a gameplay condition;

determining according to a preset methodology whether said randomly assigned game elements represent a winning outcome in said gameplay condition.

2. The method of Claim 1 wherein said random assignment of game elements is drawn from all of said game elements of said set for each said selected game element location.

3. The method of Claim 2 wherein said methodology includes a predetermined minimum number of matching game element indicia for a winning outcome.

4. The method of Claim 1 wherein said set of game elements includes subsets of matching game elements, and wherein said random assignment of game elements involves only said set as a whole for a given gameplay.

5. The method of Claim 1 wherein said game display is a matrix of rows and columns defining said game element locations.

6.   The method of Claim 5 wherein said random assignment of game elements is provided in the form of a spinning reel presentation for at least each said selected game element location, each said reel revealing a randomly assigned game element for a respective game element location in a reel-stop position.

7.   The method of Claim 3 wherein said methodology includes an awards table which has an award of increasing value for said winning outcome based upon the aggregate number of matching indicia in the gameplay condition.

8.   The method of Claim 7 wherein said methodology further includes a hierarchy of values based upon the type of indicium, such that certain indicia yield a greater award for the same aggregate number of matches.

9.   The method of Claim 5 wherein said random assignment of game elements occurs for all said game element locations for a gameplay condition, and said methodology further includes predetermined spatial arrangements of indicia in said matrix which also represent a winning outcome in said gameplay condition.

10.   The method of Claim 9 wherein said spatial arrangements include horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines.

11.   A method of playing a wagering game of chance, comprising the steps of:

providing a game display having a plurality of game element locations;

selecting game element locations in a number fewer than said plurality;

placing a wager;

providing a set of game elements with differing indicia;

after selecting said game element locations and placing said wager, then randomly assigning a game element to at least each said selected game element location for a gameplay condition;

determining according to a preset methodology whether said randomly assigned game elements represent a winning outcome in said gameplay condition, and in the event of a winning outcome providing a payout based upon a paytable included in said methodology.

12.   The method of Claim 11 wherein said methodology includes a predetermined minimum number of matching game element indicia for a winning outcome.

13.   The method of Claim 12 wherein said paytable includes an award that increases in value for said winning outcome based upon an increase in the aggregate number of matching indicia in the gameplay condition.

14.   The method of Claim 13 wherein said methodology further includes a hierarchy of values based upon the type of indicium, such that certain indicia yield a greater award for the same aggregate number of matches.

15.   The method of Claim 13 wherein said random assignment of game elements is provided in the form of a spinning reel presentation for at least each said selected game element location, each said reel revealing a randomly assigned game element for a respective game element location in a reel-stop position, and all of said game elements of said set are available on each said reel.

16.   The method of Claim 15 wherein said display is a video display, said random assignment of game elements is accomplished using a random number generating program which establishes a game element indicium to be displayed in said reel-stop position for a respective game element location in a gameplay condition.

17.   The method of Claim 12 wherein said methodology includes a plurality of paytables, said paytables being of increasing values one paytable to the next, said methodology applying a respective paytable according to the aggregate number of game element locations selected.

18.   The method of Claim 16 wherein said wager is based upon the aggregate number of game element locations selected and a wagered amount per location, and said methodology includes a plurality of paytables, said paytables being of increasing values one paytable to the next, said methodology applying a respective paytable according to the aggregate number of reels selected.

19.   The method of Claim 16 wherein said wager is based upon the aggregate number of reels selected and a wagered amount per reel.

20.   A method of playing a slot-machine type game using a spinning reel visual presentation, said reels being either mechanical or video, comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of reels in a display, each of said reels having a plurality of game indicia with at least some of said indicia being different from each other;

a player selecting a subset of less than all of said reels for play of the game;

determining a random stop position for each selected reel, with display of an indicium associated with said stop position, in a gameplay condition; and

determining an outcome of said game based upon a predetermined associative methodology of said game indicia for indicia appearing in said selected reels in said gameplay condition.

21.   The method of Claim 20 wherein said predetermined associative methodology includes matches of indicia, with an award table providing an increasing award depending on the aggregate number of matching indicia of said selected reels in said gameplay condition.

22.   A method of operating a video gaming machine, comprising the steps of:

displaying a plurality of game element locations;

a player selecting a subset of said plurality of locations which is less than all of said plurality of locations;

wagering a bet upon a final outcome of said game;

providing a set of game element indicia;

determining through a random selection from said set of game element indicia a game element indicium to be displayed for at least each of said selected subset of locations, said random selection being repeated for each said selected subset location;

displaying said game element indicium for a respective game element location;

determining an outcome for the game based upon a predetermined methodology relating to associations of certain indicia, said associations including aggregate numbers of the same indicium appearing in said selected subset locations; and

providing a payout according to a predetermined paytable based upon a winning condition as established by said paytable being presented by said outcome.

23.   The method of Claim 22 wherein said subset must be at least three selected locations.

24.   The method of Claim 22 wherein said gaming machine is a slot game wherein said plurality of game element locations are represented as reels having said plurality of stop positions with the same and finite set of game element indicia being used for each said reel.

25.   A game playing apparatus for a game of chance, comprising:

a game display;

an operating system for said game apparatus including a processor, said processor having a program effecting play of said game of chance, said

5   program having at least one payout table and a random number generating subroutine, said operating system further including a memory;

an input device through which a player provides a control input to said game apparatus;

a wagering input device;

10   a payout device;

said operating system: driving said display to present a plurality of game element locations; registering a selection input by a player of game element locations, where said program limits said selection to less than all of said plurality of game element locations; registering a wager input by the player

15   upon an outcome of said game of chance; determining a game element indicium to be displayed in at least said selected game element locations for a gameplay condition, said game element indicium being randomly assigned for each said game element location from a set of game element indicia having different indicia for such assignment; displaying said randomly determined indicium for

20   each said selected game element location; determining an outcome of said game of chance based upon said gameplay condition; and providing a payout, if any, according to a winning condition being determined as established by said payout table.

26.   The apparatus of Claim 25 wherein said gaming machine is a slot game, said plurality of game element locations are represented as reels having a plurality of stop positions with said set of game element indicia being represented on each said reel.

27.   The apparatus of Claim 25 wherein said paytable has an award of increasing value for said winning condition based upon an aggregate number of matching indicia in the gameplay condition.

28.   The apparatus of Claim 27 wherein said paytable further includes a hierarchy of values based upon the type of indicium, such that certain indicium yield a greater award for the same aggregate number of matches.

29.   A Keno-type gaming machine, comprising:

a game display having a plurality of game element locations;

an operating system for said game apparatus including a processor, said processor having a program effecting play of said game of chance, said

5   program having at least one payout table and a random number generating subroutine for selecting game elements from a set of game elements with differing indicia;

a memory;

an input mechanism through which a player provides a control

10   input to said game apparatus and a wagering input;

a payout device;

said operating system: driving said display to present a plurality of game element locations; registering a selection input by a player of game element locations, where said program limits said selection to less than all of said

15   plurality of game element locations; registering a wager input by the player upon an outcome of said game of chance; after registering said selection and said wager, then determining a game element indicium to be displayed in at least said selected game element locations for a gameplay condition, said game element indicium being randomly assigned for each said game element location

20   from a set of game element indicia having different indicia for such assignment; displaying said randomly determined indicium for each said selected game element location; determining an outcome of said game of chance based upon said gameplay condition; and providing a payout, if any, according to a winning condition being determined as established by said payout table.

30.   The gaming machine of Claim 29 wherein said random assignment of game elements is drawn from all of said game elements of said set for each said selected game element location.

31.   The gaming machine of Claim 29 wherein said paytable includes a predetermined minimum number of matching game element indicia for a winning condition.

32.   The gaming machine of Claim 29 wherein said set of game elements includes subsets of matching game elements, and wherein said random assignment of game elements involves only said set as a whole for a given gameplay.

33.   The gaming machine of Claim 32 wherein said game display is a matrix of rows and columns defining said game element locations.

34.   The gaming machine of Claim 33 wherein said random assignment of game elements is provided in the form of a spinning reel presentation for at least each said selected game element location, each said reel revealing a randomly assigned game element for a respective game element location in a reel-stop position.

35.   The gaming machine of Claim 32 wherein said paytable includes awards of increasing value for said winning condition based upon the aggregate number of matching indicia in the gameplay condition.

36.   The gaming machine of Claim 35 wherein said paytable further includes a hierarchy of values based upon the type of indicium, such that certain indicium yield a greater award for the same aggregate number of matches.

37.   The gaming machine of Claim 33 wherein said random assignment of game elements occurs for all said game element locations for a gameplay condition, and said winning condition further includes predetermined spatial arrangements of indicia in said matrix.

38.   The gaming machine of Claim 37 wherein said spatial arrangements include horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines.

39.   A video gaming machine for playing a wagering game of chance, comprising:

a video game display for presentation of a plurality of game element locations;

an operating system for said game machine including a processor, said processor having a program effecting play of said game of chance, said program having at least one payout table and a random number generating subroutine for selecting game elements from a set of game elements with differing indicia; said operating system further including a memory;

an input mechanism through which a player provides a control input to said game apparatus and a wagering input;

a payout device;

said operating system: driving said display to present a plurality of game element locations; registering a selection input by a player of game element locations, where said program limits said selection to less than all of said plurality of game element locations; registering a wager input by the player upon an outcome of said game of chance; after registering said selection and said wager, then determining a game element indicium to be displayed in at least said selected game element locations for a gameplay condition, said game element indicium being randomly assigned for each said game element location from a set of game element indicia having different indicia for such assignment; displaying said randomly determined indicium for each said selected game element location; determining an outcome of said game of chance based upon said gameplay condition; and providing a payout, if any, according to a winning outcome being determined as established by said payout table.

40.   The gaming machine of Claim 39 wherein said paytable includes a predetermined minimum number of matching game element indicia for a winning outcome.

41.   The gaming machine of Claim 40 wherein said paytable includes an award that increases in value for said winning outcome based upon an increase in the aggregate number of matching indicia in the gameplay condition.

42.   The gaming machine of Claim 41 wherein said paytable further includes a hierarchy of values based upon the type of indicium, such that certain indicium yield a greater award for the same aggregate number of matches.

43.   The gaming machine of Claim 42 wherein said random assignment of game elements is provided in the form of a spinning reel presentation for at least each said selected game element location, each said reel revealing a randomly assigned game element for a respective game element location in a
5   reel-stop position, and all of said game elements of said set are available on each said reel.

44.   The gaming machine of Claim 42 wherein said operating system includes a plurality of paytables, said paytables being of increasing values one paytable to the next, a respective paytable being applied to determine an outcome of the game according to the aggregate number of game element
5   locations selected.

45.   The gaming machine of Claim 44 wherein said wager is based upon the aggregate number of game element locations selected and a wagered amount per location.

46.   The gaming machine of Claim 43 wherein said wager is based upon the aggregate number of reels selected and a wagered amount per reel.

47.   A slot-type gaming machine using a spinning reel visual presentation, said reels being either mechanical or video, comprising:

a plurality of reels in a display, each of said reels having a plurality of game indicia with at least some of said indicia being different from each other;

5   an operating system for said machine;

an input mechanism through which a player provides a control input to said game apparatus and a wagering input;

a payout device;

said operating system: registering a selection input by a player of

10   selected reels, where said selection is limited to less than all of said reels; registering a wager input by the player upon an outcome of said game; after registering said selection and said wager, then spinning at least said selected reels for a gameplay condition, said game element indicium being randomly arrived at for each said reel;

15   an outcome of said game of chance being determined based upon said gameplay condition, with a payout, if any, according to a winning outcome being determined as established by a payout table.

48.   The gaming machine of Claim 47 wherein said outcome is predicated upon a predetermined associative methodology including matches of indicia, with a payout of an increasing value depending on the aggregate number of matching indicia of said selected reels in said gameplay condition.

49.   A method for operating a gaming machine, said gaming machine having a plurality of elements, each with a plurality of stop positions, said gaming machine is connected to a player tracking system, comprising the steps of:

5   entering a player card into a card reader connected to said gaming machine by a player;

               reading said player card by said gaming machine and said player tracking system;

               identifying the player;

10   providing a game of chance;

               displaying said plurality of elements with said plurality of stop positions on a display;

               placing a wager upon an outcome of said game of chance;

               selecting a subset of said plurality of elements by said player to

15   determine said outcome of said game of chance;

               determining a stopped or final position of said plurality of elements by use of a random selection mechanism;

               displaying said plurality of elements in said stopped or final position on said display;

20   determining said outcome of said game of chance based upon said subset stopped or final position of said subset of said plurality of elements, said player's reel stop position selection, an imbedded table, and said wager;

               crediting any winnings to said player, if earned; and

               tracking said player's bet or wager history and any winnings.

50.   A gaming machine, comprising:

a display for displaying a game of chance, said game of chance being played with a plurality of game elements;

a wager input mechanism that registers a wager input by a player,

5   said wager input including registration of an amount bet;

an operating system including a methodology for play of said game of chance, wherein each of said plurality of game elements has a plurality of stop positions with game indicia thereon,

wherein the player selects a subset of one or more of said plurality

10   of elements to determine an outcome of said game; a random selection mechanism randomly selects and displays a stop position of each of said plurality of elements on the display; said methodology determining an outcome of said game based upon combinations of said game indicia of said random stop position of said subset of one or more said plurality of elements and award winnings, if

15   any, per a paytable of winning combinations.

51.   The gaming machine of Claim 50 wherein said gaming machine is a video gaming machine, said display is a video monitor, and said operating system includes a CPU with a program having said methodology as part of said program, said program further driving said display according to said program,

5   said random selection mechanism comprises a random number generating routine.

52.   The gaming machine of Claim 51 where said gaming machine is a slot machine and said game elements are reels.